



Public Health Emergency  
Preparedness Informer

Contact Susan McNabb, Volunteer Coordinator at 209-8068 or e-mail at [susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov](mailto:susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov) July 2006

Disaster!!!!  
Who's in Charge?

Imagine that, as a volunteer, you have been called to report to a POD for an emergency. Upon arriving at the POD, you receive your assignment to help patients fill out their forms. On your way to the forms area, someone stops you and tells you to report to the video area to play the informational video. Then, on your way to the video area, you are told by someone else to find pens and take them to the registration desk. All this time you are thinking "I'm only one person! There are too many chiefs and not enough workers! This should be more organized."

In an emergency situation, the Incident Command System (ICS) is used by the Health Department, as well as other agencies who are responding to emergencies, to prevent confusion and ensure clear communication. ICS divides an emergency response into five manageable functions essential for emergency response operations: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance and Administration. Under this system the roles of different people working on the response, their lines of command, and the tasks each must complete are carefully specified.

In the Incident Command System, the Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for all aspects of the response. The Command Staff is responsible for public affairs, health and safety, and liaison

activities within the incident command structure. The General Staff includes the Operations, Planning, Logistics and the Finance/Administration sections and remain with the IC unless otherwise assigned. Operations is responsible for all operations that apply directly to the primary mission of the response. Planning is responsible for collecting and evaluating information and preparing Incident Action Plans. Logistics provides facilities, services and materials for the response. Finance/Administration covers all financial, administrative and cost analysis of the incident. Some emergencies will not require activation of all sections for a response.

In a public health emergency, the Health Department implements the Incident Command System. We will have an Incident Commander and all of the sections mentioned above stationed at the Health Department. As volunteers who are fulfilling their role during a public health emergency by staffing our Point of Dispensing clinics (POD), you will be a part of the Operations section which commits resources and "does" the job. There will also be a chain of command at the POD. There will be a POD Operations Manager assigned to each POD who will report directly to the Operations Chief at the Health Department. The POD Operations Manager is responsible for all

activities at the POD. Under the POD Operations Manager, there will be twelve sections with Lead personnel. These sections of a POD are: Triage, Greeters, Staff Check-In, Vaccination/Medication, Special Assistance, Medical Counseling, Physician, Forms Distribution, Video Area, Exit Review, Clinic Monitor and Security/Traffic. You will be assigned to one of these sections when you report to the POD site. At the POD site, you will receive Just-In-Time Training and be assigned to the Lead person in your area. Lead persons will make certain that you understand the Just-In-Time Training for your assigned section. Each Lead person will supervise no more than 15 volunteers and will report any problems or needed changes to the POD Operations Manager.

Volunteers play a vital role in our POD emergency response. The citizens in our community will need to receive medications/vaccinations quickly in an emergency situation to counter attack a disease outbreak or exposure. Our volunteers will ensure that the POD's are staffed and run efficiently. And remember, as volunteers in an emergency response, you and your family will receive any medications or vaccinations first so you will be protected and feel comfortable responding to a public health threat.

Pandemic Influenza Planning Summit Held

On June 14th, 2006, the Health Department hosted a Pandemic Influenza Planning Summit at the Chattanooga Trade and Convention Center. About 300 people attended the summit, representing many sectors of the community—emergency response, business, health-care, faith-based groups, service organizations, education, and the media. The purpose of the summit was to provide information about the H5N1 avian

influenza virus, to engage community leaders in county-wide pandemic flu planning, and to encourage business, industry, and school leaders to prepare a continuity of operations plan.

Currently, there is no imminent threat of pandemic flu. A new strain of avian influenza virus (H5N1) has been found in birds in some parts of the world, and it has been shown that this virus can infect humans. If the virus mutates in certain ways, it could possibly lead to a pandemic.

Because this known threat and other unknown threats exist, it is critical that we be adequately prepared. Latest projections predict up to a 40 percent reduction in the workforce in two disease

waves of 6-8 weeks each. As with any of the risks that we face in Hamilton County -- including natural disasters and the ongoing possibility of terrorist attacks -- it is imperative that all segments of society be prepared.

Knowing the facts is the best preparation. Reliable, accurate, and timely information is available at [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov). Another source of information on pandemic influenza is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

IN THIS ISSUE	
• Disaster!!! Who's in Charge?	1
• Pandemic Planning Summit Held	1
• Home Safety	2
• Disaster Proof Your Records	2
• Information Update	2

Visit us on the web at [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)

A small icon of a computer monitor and keyboard.

CHCHD Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department  
Office of Emergency Preparedness and Planning  
921 East Third Street  
Chattanooga, TN 37403-2165

Home Safety

Ask Americans where they feel safest and most will say their own home. However, there were more than 20 million medical visits due to unintentional home injuries last year. Just a few simple steps can dramatically reduce the dangers in most homes.

**Fires/Burns**—Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and near all bedrooms. Test the batteries once a month. Practice a home fire drill at least twice a year. Memorize the fire department’s emergency telephone number.

**Slips/Falls**—Make sure all porches, hallways and stairwells are well lit. Use the maximum safe wattage in light fixtures. Use a non-slip mat or install strips or decals in bathtubs and showers. Install grab bars in bath and shower stalls.

**Poisonings**—Keep medicines and household chemicals and cleaners up high and out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Install a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas n the home. Put your poison control center number (1-800-222-1222) near every phone.

**Grilling Safety**—Designate the grilling area a “NO PLAY ZONE”. Position your grill at least 3 feet away from house and shrubs. Use only starter fluid made for grills. If using a gas grill, check for leaks between the propane tank and fuel line.

For more information about home safety, visit these websites:

www.healthfinder.gov www.homesafetycouncil.org www.ready.gov

Disaster-Proof Your Records

Which of your important papers would you grab if you had just minutes to leave your house? Preparation will help you recover from an unexpected disaster.

Collect your personal and financial papers (see list). Choose *one place* to store the records, such as a portable file or fireproof box. Get certified copies of birth, marriage and death certificates. Store originals in a safe deposit box. If you use a computer for record keeping, make backup copies of records every 90 days and put them in the safe deposit box.

EMERGENCY FILES—what to collect:

- Bank account and investment records
- Certificates of birth, marriage, divorce, etc.
- Titles and deeds
- Insurance policies
- List of credit card accounts and phone numbers
- Forms of identification (copies of passport, driver’s license)
- Safe deposit box key (store second key with trusted friend)
- Wills, living wills, advance directives, and powers of attorney
- Household inventory (Videotape works well. Keep copy in safe deposit box or with a friend.)
- Contact information: financial institutions, employer, insurance agents, friends and family, others.
- Recent tax return
- Social Security cards
- Emergency cash
- Immunization records

Volunteer Information Update

If you have moved, changed telephone numbers, or are no longer interested in being a volunteer, please complete the form below and return to the address at the top of this page or e-mail Susan McNabb at [susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov](mailto:susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to be a volunteer at this time. Please remove my name from the active volunteer list.